



World Learning
EDUCATION | DEVELOPMENT | EXCHANGE



BALKAN DIGITAL CREATORS PROGRAM



LEADERS LEAD ON-DEMAND



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application form: <https://fs23.formsite.com/GlobalNetworks/e2jqwg02fb/index>

PROGRAM GOAL

This Leaders Lead On-Demand (LLOD) program will bring a diverse group of digital creators interested in social impact from the Balkan countries to the U.S. to explore digital communication strategies and build industry connections. Digital creators include YouTubers, bloggers/vloggers, Instagrammers, podcasters, newsroom digital transformation specialists, social media influencers, and other digital professionals.

The rise of digital new media introduces new and robust voices in the context of increased social platform usage, new medium content adaptation, innovative promotion and distribution, and emerging institutional frameworks. In a rapidly growing digital space, the Balkan region is facing social media misuse due to disinformation, flaws in internet governance, digital literacy challenges, and cybersecurity concerns.

The Balkan Digital Creators Program aims to address the challenges and opportunities of digital expansion by empowering online voices from the Balkans to become more socially engaged and contribute to the positive reshaping of the information space. Its goal is to equip Balkan digital creators with the necessary skills, tools, and industry insights while improving their awareness of social issues. The program will enhance participants' digital literacy skills to recognize and counter disinformation and contribute to a better public discourse.

The U.S. exchange will include one participant from each of the following countries: **Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, and Slovenia.**





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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The proposed dates for this program are **February 4-17, 2024**. Participating Balkan countries will each be represented by one digital creator aged 20 to 30. The program will expose participants to political discourse in new media, coverage of social issues, and social activism in the digital age. It will also highlight best practices in digital marketing, content promotion, digital storytelling, and building online organizations. The modules, throughout the program, will cover digital literacy, social activism, and entrepreneurship. In addition to meetings and experiential learning, the following workshops will correspond with each module:

Workshop 1: Digital Literacy in Global and Local Contexts Hands-on training to build skills related to finding, evaluating, and communicating information, recognizing disinformation, and learning new tools to help counter disinformation.

Workshop 2: The Role of New Media Influencers in Social Activism A look at social media as an impactful tool for activism and the role digital creators and influencers play in social movements.

Workshop 3: Entrepreneurship and Digital Organization Structure How to build a structure or an organization in the digital age including aspects of management, staffing, work environment, and entrepreneurial techniques.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW CONT.

While in the U.S., participants will visit media and communication organizations, digital startups, studios, and cultural institutions. They will engage with the new information space and strengthen their own voices as digital creators in online political and social discourse.



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LLOD COVERAGE & DELIVERABLES

The Balkan Digital Creators Program aims to generate engagement between creators and between creators and their audiences. Before the program starts, World Learning will connect participants on a digital platform and create a hashtag for them to use with their wider networks. Once the program begins, we will share pictures and videos of program activities using the hashtag and encourage participants to do the same to increase visibility.

A key component of the Leaders Lead On-Demand program design is creating results-oriented programs with actionable outcomes. Towards the end of the program, World Learning will organize a final workshop, led by professional mentors, for participants to design a media campaign related to social issues relevant in their countries. They will select a social impact topic to address and discuss through their respective platforms.

OUTBOUND

Participants in the exchange will be invited to further connect, either in-person or virtually, with DCN Global on March 12-13, 2024, coinciding with the Launching Event of the DCN Balkan Hub (tentatively scheduled to take place in Sarajevo, Bosnia Herzegovina). The focus of that event will be on the role of new media in the information space in the Balkans.

After the exchange, program participants will work with Digital Communication Network (DCN) mentors. The best media campaign projects will be showcased at one of the DCN Global events in 2024 and mini-grants will be awarded towards implementation. World Learning and DCN Global will arrange periodic virtual follow-up with the program participants to assess the social impact of their designed media campaign.



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